

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 04912 122005Z

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ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VE, VN

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER TO BE QUESTIONED CONCERNING GOV
FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. VENEZUELAN SENATE MAY 8 APPROVED A RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY MAS SENATOR POMPEYO MARQUEZ REQUIRING FOREIGN MINISTER ESCOVAR TO APPEAR BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE TO EXPLAIN WHY VENEZUELAN VISAS HAD BEEN DENIED TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR TO CUBA AND HIS SECRETARY. MARQUEZ STATED THAT "MONTHS AGO" HE HAD REQUESTED VISAS FOR THE TWO NORTH VIETNAMESE AND THAT AT THAT TIME ESCOVAR HAD NOT ONLY PROMISED TO GIVE THEM THE VISAS BUT ALSO INDICATED HE MIGHT PERSONALLY RECEIVE THEM. ACCORDING TO MARQUEZ, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AT LENGTH INDICATED THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WOULD BE ISSUED VENEZUELAN VISAS IN LIMA. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TRAVELED TO THAT CITY, WAITED A WEEK FOR THE VISAS, BUT DID NOT RECEIVE THEM, ACCORDING TO MARQUEZ.

2. MARQUEZ SAID THE FOREIGN MINISTRY EVENTUALLY EXPLAINED THAT, BECAUSE OF THE FALL OF SAIGON, IT WAS "INCONVENIENT" AT THAT MOMENT FOR THE GOV TO GRANT THE VISAS. MARQUEZ SAID THAT THIS ATTITUDE CONTRADICTED PRESIDENT PEREZ'S POLICY OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. "WE BELIEVE THAT THE SOCIALIST PARLIAMENTARY GROUP HAS THE FULL RIGHT TO INVITE ITS FRIENDS. ...IT WOULD HAVE

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PAGE 02 CARACA 04912 122005Z

BEEN MUCH MORE HONEST TO HAVE SAID NO TO US ONCE AND FOR ALL,

IN ORDER TO AVOID ALL THIS BLUFFING," SAID MARQUEZ. END UNCLASSIFIED

3. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. COMMENT. A FEW DAYS AGO
FOREIGN MINISTER ESCOVAR PUBLICLY DENIED THAT HE HAD REFUSED VISAS
TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, SAYING THAT THE GOV WAS STILL "STUDYING"
THE MATTER, AS WAS ITS RIGHT. OBVIOUSLY ESCOVAR HOPED TO POSTPONE
A DECISION ON THE VISAS UNTIL THE SITUATION IN INDOCHINA STABILIZED,
IN ORDER TO SPARE THE GOV ANY EMBARRASSMENT OVER ADMITTING NORTH
VIETNAMESE JUST AS THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT WAS
COLLAPSING. THIS PLAY WAS UNSUCCESSFUL, AND ESCOVAR WILL
PROBABLY HAVE TO FACE A LEFTIST-INSPIRED GRILLING FROM THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ABOUT GOV FOREIGN POLICY IN GENERAL, AND GOV RELATIONS
WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES IN PARTICULAR, WHEN HE RETURNS TO
VENEZUELA FOLLOWING THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOW IN PROGRESS
IN WASHINGTON.
SHLAUDEMAM

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